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CURSORY REMARKS

ON A

RECENT PUBLICATION,

ADDRESSED TO THE PUBLIC,

UPON THE

DANGEROUS TENDENCY

OF THE

London Female Penitentiary,

&c. &c.

BY JUVENIS.

"Vice parries wide
Th' undreaded volley with a sword of straw,
And stands an impudent and fearless mark."

COWPER.

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1809.

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CURSORY REMARKS,

&c. &c.

The perusal of a pamphlet lately published, entitled, "An Address to the Public upon the dangerous Tendency of the London Female Penitentiary," created in my mind mingled sensations of surprise and regret, that an individual of character, experience, and influence, should have interposed a barrier to the progressive usefulness of an institution purposed, by its founders, to relieve the miseries of an unhappy class of females, and to operate as some check to their hitherto unrestrained profligacy.

It is an ancient adage, the truth of which at once strikes our senses, that old prejudices, and young experience, are two difficult things to oppose with success: the first, rooted in the mind by particular bias of the feelings, or long habits, is too firmly fixed to be easily supplanted by other principles, without considerable violence to that vanity and self-sufficiency so universally predominant in the human heart; the latter, the attendant on minds as yet unrestrained by disappointment, or matured by knowledge and practice in the sophistry of the world, and confident of the fitness of their conceptions merely from innate feelings and impulses, which too often cloud the judgment, and cramp its reasoning faculties.

Although the writer of these remarks is not yet fettered with the prejudices of riper years, he has not attained that solid-

ity of experience which, in the estimation of many persons, would render him competent to argue a case of the present importance, against that weight of experience and ingenuity displayed by Mr. Hale. I have, however, in this cause taken up my pen with considerable satisfaction, to endeavour to counteract the sentiments advanced in the Address; with what pretensions to the patronage of the public, or benefit to the cause I espouse, must be left to time to develop: but from this I derive no small degree of encouragement, that if in error, it is on the side of humanity, in endeavouring to oppose the injury which might accrue to that benevolent Institution, whose interests I wish to contribute my humble efforts to consolidate, and whose usefulness I wish to see extended.

The author of the Address remarks, in

his exordium, that "in discussing a subject of this nature, it requires no small share of prudence, to separate what simply strikes our passions, from that solid truth which alone can convince our understanding:" and says, he hopes, in the few remarks he is about to offer, it will appear that he has endeavoured strictly to adhere to this principle. I certainly agree with him in this sentiment, that it not only requires no small share of prudence to separate what simply strikes our passions from that solid truth which alone convinces our understanding; but with all due deference to his judgment, I would go farther, and urge that, in balancing the good or evil likely to result to society from the establishment and influence of particular charitable institutions, our reason is too often guided by imagination, and our opposition founded in caprice: fancy represents to us, in strong and lively colours, the evils, or even the

abuses, of a system, which our judgment disproves; while, on the other hand, we superficially view the beneficial tendency of the ultimate object to which the means are directed.

Under the present loose and degraded condition of the morals of a large proportion of the people, every endeavour resorted to for eradicating the seeds of vice, removing the panders of voluptuousness, and fortifying the principles from the attacks of prostitution and scepticism, is worthy the strenuous support of every individual who feels himself in the least degree interested in the sacred cause of religion and humanity. The paths of error are various and infinite; the baneful effects of luxury are felt through all the arteries of the social constitution; and but for the disinterested exertions of associated philanthropists, would soon over-

whelm the principles, and consume the strength and industry, of the country, in indolence, immorality, and debauchery.

Who were the first promoters or founders of this Institution I am not informed, nor is it at all necessary that I should know; and here I would remark, that I stand totally unconnected, either directly or indirectly, with the Society, which gives me greater latitude, and enables me to speak with more freedom of its members. In looking over the list of its committee and active supporters, they are found to be men of unblemished character and reputation, men of discernment and sound judgment, who, having felt a sincere compassion for the wretchedness and misery of their unfortunate countrywomen, have exerted the most benevolent zeal to snatch them from overwhelming infamy and disgrace. But if Mr. Hale's premises are

founded in truth, and his inferences correctly drawn, we cannot entertain a very favourable opinion of the strength of their faculties, either for the wisdom of foresight, or maturity of judgment. On the contrary, in the establishment of this Institution they have proceeded on false calculations, regardless of the rules of justice, and the proportion of punishment due to the objects of their mistaken philanthropy.

Of the deplorable objects of this Asylum a few words will suffice, as of their individual characters, or situations, we have no correct knowledge; but, collectively, it is intended for the reception of those women whose lamentable condition it is, in some unguarded hour, to have deviated from the paths of virtue and happiness, generally seduced by vile profligates, initiated in the arts of infamy and

vicious habits; and the slender barriers that once guarded their virtue being now removed, and their characters lost, have no resource left wherewith to provide the necessary means of existence, but by administering to the vices, and corrupting the morals, of the other sex; unless indeed it be, that, after having been some little time hackneyed in the ways of prostitution, they can claim admittance into the workhouse.

But I shall now proceed to discuss the merits of the question at issue, and take the first part of the arguments urged against the policy of the objects the London Female Penitentiary has in view, in the order they are advanced. In the first place, Mr. Hale questions the truth of the following sentiment of Dr. Hawker, in his address to the public respecting the asylum he was endeavouring to establish at

Plymouth, that "multitudes, whose hearts revolt at the dreadful necessity of continued prostitution, are, nevertheless, constrained to pursue it for their daily support." In answer to which, he says, "there is no necessity for any one woman, however desperate her character, to continue in prostitution a single hour for her daily support;" and informs us, that a workhouse is an appropriate resort for one whose heart is smitten with remorse, and who has, perhaps, at one period of her life, moved in a sphere of life far above mediocrity; and who, however she may deplore her way of life, would look with horror on such an asylum, if she should happen to be acquainted with the circumstance that she could gain prompt admission upon her application, and confession of the degraded habits and contemptible necessities to which she had been accustomed. And when admitted an inmate of

this general receptacle of the miserable, the vicious, and the destitute, to whom could she unbosom her feelings, or the painful sense of her past errors, and receive that instruction which, being mingled with tenderness, might serve to regulate her future conduct? And above all, to whom could she look for that religious instruction so necessary to correct the immoral habits she had acquired, and fortify her mind, when once more cast upon the world, against the allurements of vice and the corruptions of her own heart, or to give her that peace of mind which the principles and doctrines of Christianity can alone impart? I think, had the author directed his inquiries through all the streets of this great metropolis, in search of a fit receptacle for the unfortunate woman, he could not have selected a plan more unappropriate for the object he has in view, when we consider the ignorance and ne-

cessary qualifications of those persons who are generally intrusted with the internal management of a poorhouse, together with the insults and taunts to which the unhappy penitent would be subjected from her fellow inmates, a description of the human species whose feelings are blunted to every sentiment of Christian compassion or humanity; and, farther, the difficulties the overseers of the parish would have to contend with in procuring her a situation suited to her former habits and present circumstances. I appeal to the candour of the reader, to judge of the fitness of Mr. Hale's method of counteracting the deplorable effects of this vicious disease.

I should have felt myself much indebted to the censor of the principles upon which the London Female Penitentiary is established, (whose great knowledge and experience in parochial affairs

are universally admitted,) if he had, in defence of his system, given one or more instances of any unfortunate women admitted into a workhouse for the reformation of her manners, who afterward left it convinced of the impropriety of her former habits, and by her future conduct gave undoubted testimony to the sincerity of her professions. I have made minute inquiry, and cannot find a solitary instance of one unfortunate girl that ever requested to be admitted into a workhouse from the horror she felt at her way of life; but have learned that hundreds have fled there through disease of body and distress of circumstances, as a refuge from the pangs of misery and the terrors of death. It must either be admitted that none of these pitiable objects repent of their enormous crimes and profligacy from principle, or that a workhouse, as a purgatory, does not accord with the state of their minds,

under such impressions as might lead them to abandon their wretched calling, could any suitable occupation be found for them.

But I turn with pleasure from the cheerless waste, where no salutary good has sprung forth to relieve the mind, weary of this dreary heath of human wretchedness, to a soil which promises an abundant harvest of usefulness and consolation. Though the recent establishment of this *mischievous* Asylum precludes the possibility of the managers as yet giving to the public a long detail of amended characters, returned to their friends, or the public, to fill honourable and useful stations of life, I have it from authority to state, that there are numbers on the Institution who have manifested the greatest remorse at their former conduct, and demean themselves with the greatest pro-

priety and order; and that the managers, from the present appearance and behaviour of all those now on probation, form the most pleasing expectation of the great benefits likely to accrue to themselves and society at large. I shall, however, here give an extract from the Bath Penitentiary, which, although unconnected with this Institution, yet as it is established upon the same principles, will demonstrate the beneficial tendency of the London Asylum.

"Convinced as the Committee are of the difficulty there may be in determining, with certainty, the progress of the improvement of the heart, or the growth of the religious principle in the soul, they are sensible that it becomes them to speak with diffidence on the real moral and religious state of six young women, who are now the objects of their care; but they

have the satisfaction of saying, if apparent piety and devotion, if uniform decency of manners and conversation, if exemplary industry and attention on the business which employs their time, and affectionate respect to the matron who superintends, be fair grounds for concluding that conviction of past errors, sentiments of contrition, and resolution of amendment, have actually taken place in the minds of the penitents, the Committee may then assure themselves that the blessing of God has descended on their endeavours to befriend these outcasts of society, and that their welfare, both temporal and eternal, is likely to be insured, by the advantages which this asylum has afforded them. Whilst the Committee perform the painful task of reporting the death of one of the young women, after her reception into the Penitentiary, they beg leave to add, that they found consolation under the melan-

choly event, in reflecting on the benefit which they have been enabled to afford to the unfortunate individual, and on the salutary impression which her awful example evidently produced on the minds of the other penitents: they look back with something more than pleasure to the circumstances of their having given shelter to a helpless and devoted female, emaciated by disease, and bowed down with affliction; of their having soothed the sorrows of a broken heart, and quieted the agitations of a distracted conscience; of their having revived religious impressions which had been long forgotten, and inspired hopes of pardon and mercy which were of sufficient power to soften the pains of decaying nature, and to triumph over the terrors of impending dissolution."

As Mr. H. has given a few extracts from the Address in the Evangelical Magazine

for November last, I will present it at full length, from which the reader will be able to form a more correct judgment of the eligibility or impropriety of the Institution.

" We are happy to be enabled to state, that the object of this Institution, which is to rescue poor deluded females from the paths of vice, by training them up in a religious and industrious course, and restoring them to a useful station in society, seems likely to be accomplished.

" There are now under the protection of the Institution upwards of forty women, whose conduct and deportment are truly encouraging: the greatest order prevails, and the most punctual regularity is observed.

" The house appropriated for their reception is at Pentonville, in an airy situation. A part of the house is well adapted

for divine worship, which is private. Suitable discourses, by approved ministers, are delivered to them every Lord's day; and the attention of the women is truly exemplary.

" The *external* management of the charity is intrusted to a committee of twenty-four gentlemen; and the *internal* economy is confided to a committee of twenty-four ladies. Mrs. Stibbs, a lady of piety and active zeal, is the voluntary matron; whose services are gratuitous. She is unremitting in her solicitude for the temporal and eternal welfare of her important charge.

" A *prompt* reception of the returning prodigal, forms a strong feature in the plan of this charity; the general outline of which is as follows:

" 1. A temporary ward, for cases of emergency.

" 2. A probationary ward for 2 months, previous to

" 3. A ward for full admission.

" 4. A ward for diseased objects; for it is the full intention of the conductors of this charity to exclude none but those who exclude themselves.

" A portion of their earnings is allowed to them.—Each female sleeps in a separate bed.

" After a period of two years, every prudent means having been first employed to restore them to their relations or friends, it is intended to provide proper situations for them, such as may be best suited to their capacity and qualifications; and afterwards to encourage them by suitable rewards, on testimony of their good behaviour.

" Since the opening of the house (Jan. 1, 1808) it has always been full; and the most painful feeling with which the committees are exercised, is the absolute necessity of refusing two or three every week,

for want of room. This distressing sensation can only be exceeded by the unfeigned grief depicted on the countenances of the disappointed applicants. The premises are, however, capable of additional buildings; and a liberal public have it in their power to prevent the recurrence of these painful sensations, by enabling the committee to enlarge their house by additional buildings, if it were only by degrees.

"The average of all the ages of those who have applied, appears to be only sixteen! Hence it is obvious, how many there must be under that tender age! Children, that claim the pity and sympathy of a generous public!—and shall they plead in vain?

"The Institution has exhausted the whole of its funds; they have numerous applications for reception; and to enlarge the sphere of the usefulness of the society would be a blessing indeed!"

If, as the author has predicted, such deadly contagion will attend the baneful influence of this Asylum, and time and experience will, when too late, convince its present supporters of the calamitous consequences of their misguided zeal; we might urge, with equal propriety, that workhouses, as constituted receptacles for the same melancholy objects, would, in a proportion nearly amounting to that of the London Female Penitentiary, open their doors to licentiousness and vice, excepting in the particular of rewards and punishments: but to counterbalance this system of encouragement, we must take it into consideration, that workhouses, from their public situation, together with the sanction of parliamentary authority, must be much better known to the unhappy women as retreats from the practice of their iniquities than the Asylum at Pentonville can possibly be. And as Mr. H. holds

out such direful presages of the injurious tendency of the principle he deprecates, how much more effectual would the remedy be, to procure a repeal of the implacable statute, which, by its enactments, sanctions such nurseries for prostitution. and here I would appeal to the candour of the unprejudiced public, whether the London Female Penitentiary is not better adapted than poor-houses for the reception of sorrowful penitents, by its select organization; and whether it is not likely to be more useful in obtaining for them appropriate situations in society, after their probationary confinement, through the connexions of those ladies who conduct its internal concerns, and the gentlemen of the committee, together with the great body of its supporters, who must all feel interested in the reputation and usefulness of the society, by their future propriety of behaviour, and industrious habits,

when sent out into the world from under its probationary discipline and religious instruction.

I have now to notice an assertion, which, in the unqualified form Mr. H. has given it, has not the shadow of a defence; that "females who, having once deviated from the paths of virtue, and are desirous of being restored to religious instructions, are not to be found in the nocturnal walks of abandoned prostitution, nor in the brothels of iniquity:" on the contrary, I assert, that such characters are to be found even in the common haunts of prostitution and vice, let their iniquities be what they may; for conscience is ever on the watch, and, in spite of every obstacle, will unremittingly exert its voice with more or less effect, and especially in the hearts of those who, in early life, have been blessed with a religious education. He farther says,

that if "they have been seduced to deviate from the paths of virtue, pregnancy is generally the natural consequence of the illicit amour:" on the contrary, it is my opinion, that when once they have submitted to fornication, instead of pregnancy being the consequence, four out of five of these pitiable outcasts launch into the iniquity and hardships of prostitution; and even allowing what is suggested, that pregnancy is the general result of the first amour, the next inquiry is, what becomes of them after their confinement—do they return to servitude? Alas! who would receive the unhappy exile from her family and friends, whose very name is only lisped to be reproached? Can she pursue any useful occupation—to whom could she apply to give her employment? Her character forfeited, destitute of friends, and, as it were, lost to the whole world, the unhappy female is at last compelled to resort to the

vices of debauchery and lewdness for subsistence, in pursuits inimical to her health, and which, from the delicate texture of her frame, frequently bring on speedy dissolution; or if she should happen to survive the impetuous shock her constitution must sustain, how deplorable that precarious existence she drags out, exposed to the hardships and sufferings of inclement seasons, subjected to the insults and capricious conduct of the dregs of human nature! But the detail is past the power of my pen competently to describe in all its force and reality—too shocking for recollection to dwell upon; but such as ought to act as a conspicuous beacon, to caution others to avoid that levity and self-confidence which have proved of such ruinous consequences to thousands of their fellow creatures. And here I cannot avoid giving an extract from the pathetic Hervey; an extract replete with important

without some medium similar to this Institution, it is not possible for them to procure a situation. And can it be supposed that any young woman, when in the first temptation to gratify her sensual inclinations, would, from the knowledge she had of the existence of the Society, be at all influenced in her conduct? As well might this objection be urged against innumerable charitable and other institutions of the first respectability and usefulness, and particularly against benefit societies, as nurseries for indolence and perjury; nay, poor-houses themselves might, with equal consistency, be objected to, as incentives to drunkenness, extravagance, and vice of every complexion—as every parishioner, however iniquitous and despicable his former life may have been, whatever injurious consequences society may have sustained from his debaucheries, or the burthens he may

have entailed on the community by the pledges he has left them to support through his thoughtlessness and neglect, cannot be precluded from an asylum in these last resorts and general receptacles (with some few exceptions) of the vicious and the wretched, who must, of course, reduce themselves to that condition of distress "that will render them capable, by dint of practice, of the greatest duplicity: then, when disease overtakes them, and they can no longer minister to the sinful gratifications of others, they can have immediate access to these promising asylums; and have only to patch up a few falsehoods to procure a prompt admission."

After several extraneous observations upon the internal economy of this institution, and the prompt admission of applicants, we have an extract given us from

the committee's report. "After suitable probation, every prudent means will be employed to induce the relations or friends of the reclaimed female to receive her into their protection, and to provide a proper situation for her;" if this, however, should prove unsuccessful, which distinction Mr. H. has not noticed, in his remarks, then "endeavours will be made by the Society to place her in a safe and respectable situation." Now as the design of the ladies to procure the reclaimed penitent a situation rested upon contingencies, he ought not merely to give us his mind upon the principles he condemns, but to allow some merit to the unexceptionable means of inducing her friends to receive the reformed prostitute—as upon the committee's good or bad success her future fate depended; and whether they resorted at all to those steps, so reprehensible in his judgment. But I should hope, for the

honour of human nature, and that laudable jealousy usually entertained by families for their good name and welfare, that they would not be deaf to the voice of humanity, or the powerful claims of their long-lost relative, restored to them through the honourable exertions of disinterested individuals; which claims would be enforced, by the committee's representation of the sincerity which, from experience, they attached to her professions of amendment, and earnest desire to live in future in some honest employment, shuddering at the recollection of her past conduct. Should, however, her relatives be callous to her supplications, and the reclaimed object be destitute of other friends, then it is that the Asylum undertakes to place her in a respectable and suitable situation. This, in my opinion, is the most objectionable part of the whole system; and I certainly think, that as there are in this

great metropolis, and in most towns where the establishment of penitentiaries is necessary, manufactories or shops where women of this description might be employed, it would be a much more eligible plan to gain them admittance there: at the same time, I have no idea of the evil extending to that magnitude, or being attended by such paralizing effects, as Mr. H. forebodes; as many of these "abandoned, diseased prostitutes, whose hardened countenances had ceased to blush at the grossest indecencies," have (before the establishment of this Society) been led to see the iniquity of their pursuits, as will be seen, in particular, in an account published by Messrs. Williams & Smith, of the conversion of four prostitutes, and the happy death of three of them. And if any of those who are sent out into the world, under the sanction of this Society, to comfortable and respectable situations, should

desert the principles they once professed, their change, of course, would be immediately discovered, and the extent of the mischief must be very circumscribed: or should they happen to be known to the servants in the neighbourhood, and any one should be inquisitive or unfeeling enough to make any observation on her former condition, I think she could not give a very enviable description of it—on the contrary, nothing but one continued detail of deprivation and suffering, such as no human being, capable of reflection, would wish to undergo.

"Oh, comfortless existence! hemm'd around
With woes; which who that suffer would not kneel,
And beg for exile, or the pangs of death?"

Again, the author says that this mischievous Institution "opens wide its doors for the reception of the most abandoned prostitutes, whenever they choose to go in;

and that not only without the least prospect of punishment, but with the actual promise of rewards, if they behave well, such as virtuous females too seldom have reason to expect, and that one of the committee informed him, the only test they have of the sincerity of these prostitutes is their own simple assertion." This objection reminds me of the complaint the elder brother of the prodigal son made to his father; and, as it appears the best refutation of the objection here stated, and is from authority too high to be controverted, I refer the reader to the 15th of Luke, from the 17th verse to the end of the chapter.

Mr. Hale remarks, that "whatever system is exhibited to the view of the lower order of society, that removes punishment from flagitious crimes, must naturally lead them to think lighter of those sins; and in

proportion as these impressions are fastened in their minds, so in proportion will their corrupt inclinations approximate towards those very evils this institution is designed to prevent." This is certainly of serious import, and had it any foundation in truth, as applicable to the Female Penitentiary, I should immediately relinquish the opinion I have hitherto held of this Asylum: but the fact is, they have not removed one penalty attached to the delinquency of the prostitute, nor have they power to inflict punishment, except it be confinement, and training her up to industrious habits. But I would ask, Which way is the most preferable—to drive her, by coercion, from the paths of lasciviousness, or to draw her from them by the blandishments of virtue, and the satisfaction imparted to her in the pursuit of some honest, industrious, calling? For when the laws are put in force to expel her from the haunts of prostitu-

tion, she must have a livelihood, and will therefore, when driven to desperation, pay some hireling for a false character, and by this means gain admittance into a family under the garb of virtue, without one bad habit corrected, or any religious instruction imparted, to amend her future conduct; while those sent from under the fostering care of the Penitentiary, having of their own accord left their former bad practices, go out into the world with their principles fortified by the kind instruction implanted in their minds: the families who receive them are acquainted with their situation, and, of course, will watch their conduct with circumspection. And here I would observe, that the pangs of remorse they must most, if not all, of them feel at their former bad conduct, the reiterated calls of conscience, and the religious instruction they have received, cannot allow them to pass their hours in that

gaiety of heart we might at first thought suppose; for they must ever after look with horror upon those sufferings and privations they have endured. "The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear?"

In Mr. Hale's remarks on that levity and thoughtlessness which are the general characteristics of female servants of the present day, I fully coincide, and lament and deprecate it as a serious evil.

Again, he says that "when a temptation is suggested, which is suited to depraved inclinations, reason will make but little impression upon the mind, when it has to contend with the enchanting prospect of present gratification." We may, therefore, from the author's own hypothesis, conclude, that calculation is seldom entered into, on the consequences likely

to attend the illicit indulgence. No, experience has too often fatally proved, that the first deviation from the paths of rectitude is the result of the moment, when reflection is over-ruled by the strength of the passions.

I now come to the assertion, that the "principles of the London Female Penitiary cannot be supported by precept or example from the word of God;" and that "no society is authorized by the word of God to open an asylum, and proclaim that it is for the purpose of admitting those exclusively who have been guilty of the most flagitious crimes, without the least distributive punishment." The first part of this argument I shall discuss at the end of these remarks; and with respect to the authority from which this Society derives its principles, it is to be recollected, that it is a resort for those who have no possibility

of procuring an honest livelihood but through such medium, and that the objects are still open to the penalties due to their depraved practices, but that, being admitted into this Asylum, and abandoning their former iniquities, there are the fewer of these ensnaring harpies left to walk the streets, and beguile, by their indecent solicitations, the unwary passenger.

Mr. H. states, "That if any government proceeds upon the principles of declaring to the public that those who commit certain crimes shall go unpunished, and be kindly treated as though they were guilty of no offence, that government, in its public capacity, is answerable for the disruption of morals occasioned by the fatal example of this violation of their duty. This same reasoning will apply with equal or *more* force to the London Female Penitentiary." And farther, why did not the

"Society for the Suppression of Vice build an asylum, and proclaim aloud that it was for the sellers of obscene prints in the schools of our children?" But here I must again observe, that the Asylum has not removed a penal statute, nor is it their province to put in force the penalties of the law; neither would it be a very proper step on the part of that government who have enacted laws, to do away their force in this way:—no, let the persons in power exercise the rod of correction. And if a Society unconnected with this Institution will by their philanthropic exertions assist the hand of magisterial authority, they will unitedly act as a spur to the operative usefulness of the Penitentiary, at that period when its funds are happily so much increased that the establishment can receive more females into its care than those who apply for admission of their own accord. And here I

would suggest, that if females are so readily disposed to enter this place of confinement, which course of treatment will best promote the ultimate reformation all wish to see realized in their conduct and condition; viz. that recommended by Mr. Hale to the conductors of the Penitentiary, when he says, "The first thing they ought to have done, should have been to prosecute lewd women; and after they had endured the punishment of their crime in a solitary place of confinement, then, and then only, would have been the time to have brought them into a Penitentiary," —or the means at present pursued by the Institution. I make my appeal to the candour and unprejudiced understanding of the reader who is at all experienced in the character and passions of the human heart, if it is not evident to his senses that there is a much better prospect of the greater amendment taking place in that

female's manners who is admitted from her own unbiassed application, than of her who, being first prosecuted by this Asylum, and through their means having endured confinement in a solitary place, is then informed that by discipline she is now rendered a qualified candidate for their protection and patronage. I am convinced of the truth of my position, when I assert that not one fourth of those unfortunate women so proceeded against, would be induced to accept the proffered boon.

What parallelism can be drawn between the enormous crimes of those who corrupt the principles of youth, by selling them obscene prints, and the objects of the Penitentiary, I am at a loss to conceive. Vice in all its forms is odious, but there are gradations in iniquity: and I would here urge the greater atrocity of those incendia-

ries who by their execrable attempts, aimed at the corrupt and dormant passions of youth of both sexes, at that critical and tender age when under a course of education, too often fan the latent spark of unlawful desire into a flame; and the deep and abiding impressions their minds admit of at this interesting period of life. After considering the baneful consequences of their poisonous infusions, what arguments can be urged in behalf of an asylum for these agents of barbarity, with that propriety and force they can be for the Penitentiary, I have no conception. They first went into their detestable employments by choice; they experience no privations in the pursuit of them, and have a thousand occupations to which they could resort to procure a livelihood, if they would abandon them; they had no beguiling solicitations and false promises to seduce them from the paths of

consistent conduct, they dismiss her with the admonition our Lord gave to the adulteress before mentioned—"Go, and sin no more." And I will here present the reader with a few instances, out of the many that are recorded in Scripture, in support of the principles of the London Female Penitentiary. "Let him know, that he who converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." Again, "When Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance." He may also refer to the parable of the prodigal, and to the conversion of the Samaritan harlot, of Zaccheus, and of Mary Magdalen, together with many examples of the compassionate regard and benevolence our Saviour manifested to all who sincerely re-

pented of their former wickedness, and the charitable veil he cast over their transgressions—no longer injurious to society, or necessary to be reprobated, the converts having seen the evil of sin, and entertaining a proper sense of its dreadful consequences.

Having thus taken into consideration Mr. Hale's chief objections to the principles upon which the London Female Penitentiary is founded, and the direful presages he holds out of its ultimate effects, here I must remark, that the more I have considered this highly interesting subject, the firmer are my convictions of its beneficial tendency rooted, and the more inflexible are my opinions as to the fallacy of his predictions. Having given nothing but the undisguised sentiments of my mind, actuated by no other motives than those of humanity, I com-

mit these remarks, however inadequate to my wishes, to the public ordeal, with confidence in the justice and expediency of the measures espoused therein. I leave the subject, satisfactorily convinced that the foundation now laid of this humane Institution will, if carried on with vigour, conducted with perseverance, and extended to the utmost limits of public patronage and munificence, be consummated in experience, a superstructure of inconceivable utility, and evidence to its sceptical opposers, that the misery and ruin they predicted as the result of its consolidation, were but the illusive phantoms of their own imaginations.

THE END.

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